



HOSTING YOUR OWN AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION TEACH-IN

A TOOL KIT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES TO
ACCELERATE AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL
EXCELLENCE AND RESPOND TO URGENT NEEDS OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES



THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE
ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS





Hosting Your Own African American Education Teach-In:

A tool kit for individuals and communities to accelerate
African American educational excellence and respond
to urgent needs of African American students and communities

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education

Arne Duncan
Secretary

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

David J. Johns
Executive Director

September 2015

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Thank you to Lauren Mims and Bakar Ali for your contribution in developing this tool kit.



At the AfAmED Summit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in October 2014, students make recommendations for how caring and concerned adults can ensure that African American students of all ages feel safe, engaged and supported.



Supporters of African American educational excellence,

I am excited by your interest in holding a teach-in on educational excellence for African Americans. Students at every age deserve opportunities that support their ability to thrive. Providing high-quality learning and development opportunities for all of them is crucial to strengthening the nation.

To support the goals outlined in the executive order from President Obama establishing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative) and to provide a platform for African American youths to make recommendations for actions that caring and concerned adults can take to ensure all African American students feel safe, engaged, and supported in schools and in life, the Initiative has hosted the Summits on Educational Excellence for African Americans series (AfAmEd Summits) in communities across the nation. Each AfAmEd Summit has gathered students, parents, families, individuals, and organizations for informative and uplifting days of storytelling, empowerment, networking, and support. AfAmEd Summits are a powerful tool to disrupt and supplant negative stereotypes of Black students and to highlight opportunities for individuals to support learning and development.

Now it is your turn! This tool kit is designed to support you in hosting a teach-in on educational excellence for African Americans to raise awareness about the importance of investing in African American youths, highlight individuals and organizations in your community supporting the learning and advancement of African American students, and support networks of individuals and community-based organizations engaged in this critical work.

In this tool kit, you will find tips and best practices we learned from hosting AfAmEd Summits. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns that may arise. Please also be sure to share pictures, video, and recommendations from your teach-in. We are eager to support you and celebrate your work. Thank you in advance for responding to President Obama's call to improve educational outcomes for African Americans of all ages, and to ensure that all African Americans receive an education that properly prepares them for college, productive careers, and satisfying lives.

Sincerely,

David J. Johns

Executive Director

White House initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

Essential Elements of a Teach-In

1. Honor youths as experts.

It is important to provide a platform for experts — African American students — to speak truth to power and to make recommendations for how caring and concerned adults can ensure that African American students feel safe, engaged, and supported. Invite students from your community to serve as panelists. Empower them to lead in the design and execution of the teach-in. Be sure to engage and partner with organizations that serve, educate and empower youths to ensure success. Encourage youths to present in creative ways and to showcase how their experience gives them valuable expertise that should inform policy and practice. Student films, poetry, songs, artwork, and other multimedia presentations are a great way to promote engagement before, during, and following the teach-in. Above all else, ensure that the teach-in responds to or otherwise addresses the most pressing concerns faced by youths in your community.

2. Highlight resources.

Highlighting opportunities for individuals to support the learning and development of African American students is critical to ensuring success. Engage diverse individuals and organizations that can highlight programs, financial support, and other resources for accelerating the learning and development of African Americans at every level in the planning and execution of your teach-in.

3. Strengthen community.

Allow time for participants, stakeholders, and leaders in the community to meet and exchange resources and information. This will help to strengthen community among caring and concerned adults engaged in this village work. Before the teach-in, consider hosting a luncheon or convening to establish rapport and identify assets and resources. During the teach-in, include time for a community forum so attendees can highlight programs and resources. At the conclusion of the teach-in, consider hosting a reception to allow for extended conversations, networking, and discussion of follow-up activities and responsibilities.

4. Use technology to optimize impact.

It is important to give everyone a seat at the table by sharing information and allowing for both face-to-face and virtual engagement. Consider showing a live Twitter feed during the teach-in to highlight the virtual community and discussion. Using the hashtag #AfAmEdTeachIn allows anyone with a broadband connection to engage. Videotaping the event will enable you to highlight and share key themes and recommendations. If resources permit, consider livestreaming the event. Please refer to our social media guide (Appendix 7) for tips on leveraging technology and new media.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is it important to host a teach-in?

A teach-in can

- i. provide a platform for Black youths to demonstrate their genius, raise awareness of the importance of investing in African American educational excellence, and promote actions that caring and concerned adults must take to ensure that African American students feel safe, engaged, and supported both at school and in the community;
- ii. highlight individuals and organizations accelerating the learning and development of African Americans; and
- iii. support community engagement by creating and facilitating opportunities for parents, grandparents, guardians, and other caring adults to increase the number of African Americans who successfully attain postsecondary certificates, credentials, and degrees of value, and are otherwise prepared for success.

2. Whom should I invite to my teach-in?

It takes a village to create change. Invite individuals to attend who are or who should be engaged in supporting the learning and development of African Americans of all ages. Invite individuals responsible for learning and development, including local government officials, scholars, teachers, parents, faith leaders, and business and industry leaders.

3. Whom should I invite to serve on panels?

Panelists should be primarily students. Remember to use the teach-in to highlight the experiences of students from the community, especially African American children and youths. Allow students to identify the most pressing issues in their schools and community, make recommendations, and design solutions.

4. What are good panel topics?

Panels should focus on 1) highlighting the assets and experiences of African American students and 2) facilitating opportunities to address critical local concerns, especially those impacting learning and achievement. Attendees at AfAmEd Summits have discussed a wide variety of topics, including ending the school-to-prison pipeline; supporting Black male achievement (connected to President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative); supporting Black women and girls (connected to the White House Council on Women and Girls); the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy; the importance of family and community engagement; ensuring access to high-quality early education; sustaining strong community-school partnerships; and challenging negative stereotypes of Black students, families, and communities.

5. What if I want leadership from the Initiative to attend or participate in my teach-in?

Supporting the work of individuals and communities facilitating the learning and development of African American students is important to us. Please contact us in writing at least six months in advance of your scheduled teach-in so that we can have a thoughtful conversation about how we can support your work.

6. How do I make sure my teach-in is a success?

We hope this teach-in tool kit will support your success and ultimately increase access to opportunities for African American students in your community. Consider forming a planning committee comprising individuals committed to successfully executing the teach-in. Ensure that highlighting opportunities to support African American students remains the primary focus of your efforts. Create an actionable plan to ensure that the community is committed to and will be held accountable for responding to what is shared during the teach-in. Set goals and create a timeline to advance the work.

7. How do I ensure an asset-based teach-in?

Highlight the promise and potential of African American students by ensuring their voice and experience remain at the center of all conversations and work. Also, rely on evidence and data. Urge participants to ask those who use negative, not asset-based accepted terms in the field to provide evidence. The narrative about Black youths in the U.S. is cloaked in myths. For example, one popular myth implies that there are more Black men in jail than in college. In reality, there are approximately 600,000 more Black men in college than in jail. Do not be afraid to speak up! Your teach-in can change the narrative about Black youths by highlighting the many ways they demonstrate, in the words of Nina Simone, being “young, gifted, and Black.”¹

8. How do I ensure there is meaningful follow-up beyond the conclusion of the teach-in?

Create time for networking at the event. Encourage participants to exchange contact information and continue to build upon the foundation established during the teach-in. Invite graduate students to take notes and then synthesize teach-in themes and recommendations into an event summary. After the teach-in, send an event summary highlighting key themes and recommendations. Identify follow-up commitments and activities to advance the work. Develop a virtual resource list of individuals, organizations, and other sources of support and share it among participants.

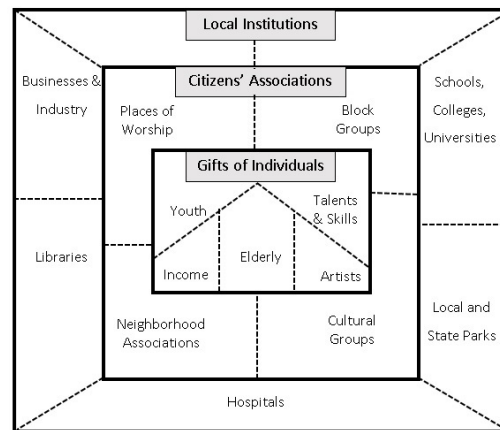
¹Nina Simone, “To Be Young, Gifted and Black,” Black Gold. 1970, RCA Victor.

9. How do I advertise the teach-in?

Leverage both new and traditional media to advertise the teach-in. We have included both a sample press release and a published op-ed that can be models for your own documents to send to local media (appendices 6 and 9). Build excitement and encourage attendance and active engagement through personalized outreach to community leaders. Additionally, please refer to our social media guide (Appendix 7) for tips on leveraging Twitter and other new media.

10. How do I find partners and sponsors?

A great first step is to develop an asset map such as the one shown here. It is a diagram of individuals, businesses, and organizations in your community that can contribute time, resources, and expertise to the teach-in. Once your asset map is completed, you will have a better idea of the resources available to you in your community. This map can also be used throughout the planning process to assist with inviting panelists and teach-in attendees. Potential partners and sponsors can also be highlighted during the teach-in.



Executive Director David Johns (back row) poses with Chabot College's Striving Black Brothers at the Oakland AfAmEd Summit at Laney College on June 13-14, 2014.



Teach-In Check List

The following checklist has been developed to help you successfully plan and execute a teach-in. Additionally, we have appended templates and sample documents to support you throughout the process.

Develop the Teach-In Structure.

- ☐ Identify goals and objectives for the event, including the main focus, which is to highlight the voice and experiences of African American students and to develop a plan to accelerate the learning and development of African American students.
- ☐ Secure a venue or institutional partner (e.g., public facilities, including elementary and secondary schools, libraries, and postsecondary institutions of higher learning).
- ☐ Identify date, time, and teach-in structure.
- ☐ Identify expected outcomes (e.g., a call to action or commitments to ensure active engagement following the teach-in).
- ☐ Identify and establish a planning committee.

Develop the Agenda.

- ☐ Develop the agenda (Appendix 1).
 - ✓ Identify panel goals.
 - ✓ Identify youth experts to serve on the panels.
- ☐ Extend invitations to (Appendix 2)
 - ✓ panelists
 - ✓ Community, faith and industry leaders, and sponsors
 - ✓ attendees and community partners
 - ✓ local elected officials and education leaders

- ☐ Confirm participants.
 - ✓ Determine pre-teach-in who the panelists will be.
 - ✓ Hold a meeting with the panelists prior to the teach-in to ensure they feel comfortable and affirmed in their expertise.
 - ✓ Determine the on-site registration process to ensure you are aware of who attended and can be engaged in the follow-up work.
- ☐ Identify and engage partners, such as
 - ✓ talent (celebrities, entertainers, athletes, and other validators)
 - ✓ media
 - ✓ community-based organizations
 - ✓ business and industry leaders
 - ✓ local elected officials
 - ✓ educator-teachers and leaders
- ☐ Create master list of invited attendees (Appendix 3).
 - ✓ Invite community and youth-led organizations, educators, community and faith leaders, and business or industry leaders to engage in this important work.

Event Materials

- ☐ invitation letter (Appendix 5)
- ☐ press release or media advisory (Appendix 6)
- ☐ social media guide (Appendix 7)
- ☐ event slides
- ☐ appreciation
- ☐ thank-you notes to participants (Appendix 8)
- ☐ thank-you notes for institutional hosts
- ☐ op-ed (Appendix 9)

Gather and Finalize Teach-In Day Materials and Logistics.

- ☐ Confirm receipt of materials to be used at the teach-in, such as
 - ✓ videos, as applicable
 - ✓ PowerPoint or multimedia presentations, as applicable
 - ✓ physical production materials, such as
 - stage backdrop
 - handouts and promotional materials
 - pop-ups and signage
- ☐ Confirm graduate students or other leaders to take notes, synthesize themes, and make recommendations.

Teach-In Follow-up

- ☐ Send thank-you letters to
 - ✓ panelists
 - ✓ partners and host
 - ✓ Community, faith and industry leaders, and sponsors
- ☐ Find, collect, and share media from the events using [Storify.com](https://www.storify.com).
- ☐ Draft and disseminate final event summary.
- ☐ Discuss next steps with partners.



Appendix 1: Draft Agenda

| [DATE] | [TIME] | [INSTITUTION] | [LOCATION] |
|--------|---|---------------|------------|
| [TIME] | Welcome Remarks | | |
| | [NAME], [POSITION AND ORGANIZATION] | | |
| | Overview | | |
| | [PERSON NAME], [INSTITUTION HOST] | | |
| [TIME] | Panel Discussion I: Reimagining Opportunity for Black Youths in [YOUR AREA] | | |
| | Moderator: [NAME], [ORGANIZATION] | | |
| | [PANELISTS] | | |
| [TIME] | Panel Discussion II: Stabilizing Public Schools to Advance Student Achievement and Ensure College and Career Readiness | | |
| | Moderator: [NAME], [POSITION AND ORGANIZATION] | | |
| | [PANELISTS] | | |
| [TIME] | Call to Action: Community Conversation, Reactions, and Recommendations | | |
| | [PANELISTS] | | |
| [TIME] | Closing Remarks | | |
| | [PERSON NAME], [POSITION AND ORGANIZATION] | | |
| [TIME] | Reception | | |

Appendix 2: Invitation to Panelists and Speakers

Dear _____,

On behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and [PARTNER OF THE SUMMIT], I invite you to participate in a dialogue about how to contribute to closing the achievement gap for African American students throughout the country.

[In this paragraph, discuss why the summit is important to your community and goals you hope to accomplish through organizing this teach-in.]

To ensure members of our community have the information and resources needed to support our youths, [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and [PARTNER(S) OF THE SUMMIT] will host a teach-in designed to ensure all caring adults have the information and support needed to enhance African American educational excellence.

We invite you to participate in our teach-in at [LOCATION AND DATE]. Specifically, we invite you to [describe the role you wish for the panelist/speaker/sponsor to play during the teach-in].

We thank you in advance for considering this humble request to contribute to educational excellence for African Americans. Should you have any questions or need any additional information to reach a favorable decision, please do not hesitate to contact [CONTACT PERSON].

Sincerely,

Appendix 3: Invitation List

[illegible]

Appendix 4: Luncheon Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

Before our teach-in on educational excellence for African Americans this coming [DATE] at [LOCATION], we will have a luncheon, to which you are cordially invited. It will take place in the [LOCATION] [ADDRESS] from [TIME] to [TIME]. The purpose of the luncheon is to introduce everyone involved in the teach-in to each other and to discuss the goals of the event. I look forward to seeing you there. Many thanks to [PARTNERS] for sponsoring this wonderful event.

You can access the teach-in agenda at [EVENT LINK].

To RSVP for the luncheon please email [CONTACT PERSON], copied here, by [DATE AND TIME].

Warmest regards,

Appendix 5: Sample Invitation to Participants

December 20, 2013

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) invite you to attend a one-day education summit on Tuesday, January 14, 2014. The AFT will host the event at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., located at 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

The summit is designed to facilitate collaborative discussion and engagement among individuals and organizations committed to addressing educational inequality, especially among African American students, schools, and communities. The aims of the summit are to

1. strengthen community among individuals working in education reform, civil rights, youth development, and related fields and industries;
2. facilitate increased collaboration and coordination by allowing individuals and organizations to share significant areas of focus and key dates throughout the calendar year; and
3. reinforce collective impact by leveraging resources and effort.

The AFT is a union of professionals championing fairness, high-quality public education, and healthcare services through community engagement and political activism. It is pleased to partner with the Initiative, a cross-agency effort aimed at identifying evidence-based practices that improve student achievement and at developing a national network that shares these best practices.

Your participation is critical to contributing to developing and pursuing a shared strategy for increasing African American learning and development, including identifying measurable goals and a timeline to inform the work going forward. This process is critical to ensuring that our efforts result in sustained investments in improving learning and development for African American students, families, and communities throughout the United States.

To accept this invitation, please register at the following link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dZx6NZi1KWbEJPTq3dK0U71aXxYLVspkCyrOGsmeAQs/viewform>. Please note that registration will close at midnight on January 8, 2014. A detailed agenda with confirmed guests and a program draft will be sent to you prior to the event.

Should you have any questions, please contact Preston Clark at (202) 453-7282 or at preston.clark@ed.gov.

There will be a reception immediately following the summit and we hope you can join us. We greatly appreciate your willingness to participate and look forward to our continued partnership on these very important topics in the future.

Sincerely,

David J. Johns
Executive Director
White House Initiative on
Educational Excellence for
African Americans

Dr. Lorretta Johnson
Secretary-Treasurer
American Federation of Teachers

The first paragraph should include teach-in logistics such as the location, time and partnering individuals/organizations.

The first paragraph should discuss your teach-in goals and objectives.

In this paragraph, explain why your invitees' presence is important.

In this final part, include details for how to RSVP or follow-up.

Appendix 6: Sample Press Release or Media Advisory

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans Hosts the African American Education Summit at the University of California, Los Angeles

Contact: Press Office, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov

Event Date 1: June 25, 2015, 1 to 1:30 p.m.

Event Date 2: June 25, 2015, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

Event Date 3: June 26, 2015, 1 to 5 p.m.

The [White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans](#) (Initiative) will visit the Audubon Middle School in Los Angeles on Thursday, June 25. On Friday, June 26, at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the Initiative will host the [African American Education Summit](#), a solutions-based forum to improve learning and development opportunities for African American students.

On Thursday, [David Johns, executive director of The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans](#), will tour the Audubon Middle School, where over 50 percent of the students enrolled in the gifted magnet program are African American. Following the tour, Johns will participate in a roundtable discussion at the school, convened by Los Angeles Unified School District Board Member Dr. George McKenna. This discussion will focus on sharing best practices and challenges of African Americans in education.

The following day, Johns will open the African American Education Summit by moderating the panel discussion “Reimagining Opportunity for Black Youth in Los Angeles.” The complete [agenda for the summit](#) can be found online. The summit is being held in collaboration with UCLA’s Sociology and African American Studies departments, the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, and the Black Male Institute.

“The Initiative is proud of this signature event, which provides African American students with the opportunity to share their experiences and make recommendations for how caring and concerned adults can ensure students feel safe, engaged, and supported—both in school and in life,” said Johns “The Summit provides us with a chance to hear from those most impacted by the decisions adults make. We’re hopeful that by highlighting the importance of listening and responding to students, their needs and recommendations will inform both policy and practice.”

“The Summit is a forum to affirm and understand the experiences of Black students in and across Los Angeles. In light of recent events in Baltimore, Ferguson, and Charleston, it is essential that we take stock of the lessons and practices born from our students’ pursuit of educational excellence,” said Professor Marcus Anthony Hunter, author of

Black Citymakers: How the Philadelphia Negro Changed Urban America. “Given its role as the major public university in Los Angeles and the recent departmentalization of African American Studies, UCLA is a crucial and fruitful venue for these important discussions,” added Hunter.

[Data released earlier this year](#) show that U.S. students are graduating from high school at a higher rate than ever before. The nation’s high school graduation rate hit 81 percent in 2012–13, the highest level in the nation’s history. Graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students increased by nearly 4 percentage points from 2011 to 2013, outpacing the growth for all students in the nation, according to [new data](#) from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics. Moreover, the data show that the gap between white students and Black and Hispanic students receiving high school diplomas narrowed over that time.

To ensure the economic strength of our country, students must graduate high school ready for college, careers, and life. The U.S. Department of Education has invested more than \$1 billion in early education, implemented strategies that improve achievement and close opportunity gaps, awarded billions of dollars through such grant programs as [Race to the Top](#), [Investing in Innovation](#), and [School Improvement Grants](#), and [expanded college access and affordability for families](#).

You can also follow Twitter updates on Twitter via [@AfAmeducation](#).

Event 1

Who: David Johns, executive director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans
George McKenna, Los Angeles Unified School District board member
What: Audubon Middle School site visit
When: Thursday, June 25, from 1 to 1:30 p.m. PT
Where: Audubon Middle School
4120 11th Ave.
Los Angeles, CA

Event 2

Who: David Johns, executive director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans
George McKenna, Los Angeles Unified School District board member
What: Roundtable discussion
When: Thursday, June 25, from 2:30 to 4 p.m. PT
Where: Audubon Middle School
4120 11th Ave.
Los Angeles, CA

Appendix 7: Social Media Guide

Engage the community virtually using the following resources:



Tweet thoughts and ideas using #AfAmEdTeachIn and [@AfAmEducation](#).



Share pictures of African American excellence and your time at the teach-in via Instagram with #AfAmEdTeachIn or at www.instagram.com/officialafamed



Learn more about this work by visiting the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans at www.ed.gov/£AfAmed Teach In.



FOURSQUARE

Check in to [LOCATION] on Foursquare: [LINK].



Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OfficialAfAmEd



Deputy Director Khalilah Harris facilitates a discussion with youths during the Philadelphia AfAmEd Summit on October 24, 2014.

Appendix 8: Sample Thank-You Letter

May 1, 2014

Dear Dr. Harris:

On behalf of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans I thank you for your participation in the 2014 Summit Series on Educational Excellence for African Americans at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Thank you for sharing your time and discussing your commitment to improving academic and life outcomes for African Americans. Your expertise helped to elevate promising and proven strategies, equipping caring and concerned participants with resources they can implement, today, to support our students, schools, and communities.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans is working with individuals and organizations throughout the country to highlight and share effective national and local programs, policies and practices that support the development and success of African American students. We encourage you to share any resources that you are aware of so that we may share them with others. Your participation in the Summit Series, and your leadership in education more generally, are critical. Photos from the event can be found at [LINK]. Please share with us any new research or examples you happen upon so that we can share that information with our networks. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email at AfAmEducation@ed.gov, if I, or a member of the initiative's staff, may be of assistance to you.

We thank you for all that you do every day for our students, our schools, and our country.

Sincerely,

David J. Johns
Executive Director
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

Thank participants for their involvement, reminding them of your teach-in goals.

Explain the work of you and your partners are doing, with the goal of creating sustainable partnerships.

Guide them to online resources post-event and your contact information for follow-up.

Appendix 9: Sample Op-Ed

► **Talk Back**

9

JUL 2015

EDUCATION EXCELLENCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS?

That would be dope. ...

BY DAVID JOHNS AND DR. MARCUS HUNTER



JET wants you to Talk Back. This is one of the reader submissions that we received and opted to publish. Want to make your voice heard? Submit your commentary, TV show recap, poem, 500-word book excerpt or essay [\[HERE\]](#). Read all the rules so you know how it works.

The new movie *Dope* stars Shameik Moore as a young brilliant Black Los Angeles high school student who gets entangled in a haphazard scheme to sell drugs. Playing on the stereotype of young Black men as “dope dealers,” the film illustrates a host of obstacles faced by Black youth when pursuing educational excellence and sometimes to survive. Is the film mere Hollywood hyperbole?

Truth is, it’s not.

In the United States, Black students encounter a series of educational detours that compromise academic success.

Unlike *Dope*, for too many Black students there are not happy endings. A recent report by researchers at the African American Policy Forum and Columbia Law School found that Black girls are more likely to be suspended compared to White, Asian and Latina [girls](#). The suspension rates for Black boys are equally

troubling, representing 20% of total suspensions (<http://ocrdata.ed.gov>). Such suspension rates mean that Black students are more likely to miss a fatal amount of days of instruction. Upon completing their studies, Black students face a higher unemployment rate (10.5%) relative to Whites (4.7%), Asians (4.1%) and Hispanics (6.7%). Data from the [U.S. Department of Education](#) also reveals that Black students are more likely to be placed into special education and less likely to have access to college- and career-ready coursework.

What can we do about this? Where are the solutions? During a [recent Summit](#) on African American Educational Excellence (AfAmEdSummit) held at UCLA in late June, we learned from Black student panelists that fruitful solutions lay in an undervalued source: the voices and experiences of Black students.

Consider Charity Chandler. Charity served as one of nine panelists at the AfAmEdSummit and recently received her Master's degree in Business Administration. Now in her late twenties by the time Charity had reached 18 she had experienced "being bullied and raped as well as the foster care and juvenile justice systems." While in foster care, Charity "was sexually exploited," and was frequently told "that she wouldn't amount to anything,"—this sometimes from the very people who were charged with supporting her learning and development. During the panel, Charity underscored the importance of all young people having caring and concerned adults to support them as they learn and grow. There were not many images of success, nor the support that typically comes from family surrounding her. She would give birth to her first child before the age of 21.

The AfAmEdSummit acknowledged and celebrated Charity as an expert because of her lived experience. What we learned from Charity was that when provided a platform, she was able to make recommendations for policy and practice while reminding people of the importance of listening to those most often neglected and ignored (I want this to be about the importance of pushing past the tendency to only want to hear from those who are straight A students to honor the experiences of those who have lived in all forms). Charity spoke powerfully about how education and faith worked together to keep her motivated. She wanted to be an example for her young child of how to succeed in spite of obstacles, which culminated in 2012 when she received her BA from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Her story and message resonated at the AfAmEdSummit, in large part because she literally had to thrive and survive within the difficult contexts of gangs, juvenile courts, rape, and sex work—and has succeeded in spite of it all. Her message to all, but especially our young Black women is "If Charity did it, so can I."

This is but one example of the creative genius and tenacity that resides within each of our students, boys and girls alike. To optimize efforts to accelerate achievement, we have to learn directly from the experiences and recommendations of Black students. Because there are no lay people in the work

of supporting our students, the Summit's Black student panelists offered some simple everyday practices and perspectives we can all adopt to affect change.

Mind what you say. Messages matter and there is power in precision. Too infrequently are Black students and children told they CAN go to college. Essential to undoing this trend is using facts to bust myths like "there are more Black men in prison than in college, and more young Black girls with babies than diplomas." If we change how we think about our students, it impacts how they are treated and supported. Students tend to remember how they were treated while completing their education, and the trauma of bad experiences can follow them throughout their journey. Subjects students thrive in can be anchors and positively inform their overall achievement. This means that programs in music and arts, physical education, and AP courses play a huge role in overall retention and matriculation outcomes.

This is village work. Too often debates and policies about supporting learning and development are reduced to an "educational blame game"—identifying culprits and pointing fingers up-and-down the educational hierarchy with little regard to the fact that every caring and concerned adult has a role to play in supporting our students, schools and country. In fact, there is a role for everyone to play, from mentoring to supporting extra-curricular opportunities to campaigning to save music programs in our schools. Imagine if we all start to listen to and learn from African American students and their experiences. Now that would be, in a word, dope.

David J. Johns is executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans. Marcus Anthony Hunter is assistant professor of sociology and African American studies at UCLA and author of "Black Citymakers: How the Philadelphia Negro Changed Urban America".

Appendix 10: Department of Education Regional Representatives

Representatives of the Department of Education in your region can guide you to the latest information and resources available to support educational excellence, such as programs, events, and funding opportunities. The list below includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the representatives in each of the regional offices.

Headquarters

Office location: Washington, D.C.
Dennis Bega, Director, Regional Operations
Darlene Mayo
Kathrina Bridges
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202
Telephone: 404-974-9450

Region I

Office location: Boston, Massachusetts
States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont
Elizabeth Williamson
U.S. Department of Education
POCH Building, 5 Post Office Square
9th Floor, Room 24
Boston, MA 02110
Telephone: 617-289-0100

Region II

Office location: New York, New York
States: New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands
Jacquelyn Pitta
Taylor Owen Ramsey
U.S. Department of Education
Financial Square
32 Old Slip, 25th Floor
New York, NY 10005
Telephone: 646-428-3906

Region III

Office location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

States: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia

Elizabeth Williamson

U.S. Department of Education

The Wanamaker Building

100 Penn Square East, Suite 505

Philadelphia, PA 19107

Telephone: 215-656-6010

Region IV

Office location: Atlanta, Georgia

States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Dennis Bega

Martin Richburg

Jonava Johnson

Malissa Coleman

U.S. Department of Education

61 Forsyth St. SW, Suite 19T40

Atlanta, GA 30303

Telephone: 404-974-9450

Region V

Office location: Chicago, Illinois

States: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin

Julie Ewart

Shirley Jones

U.S. Department of Education

500 W. Madison St., Suite 1427

Chicago, IL 60661

Telephone: 312-730-1700

Region VI

Office location: Dallas, Texas

States: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Dennis Bega

U.S. Department of Education

1999 Bryan St., Suite 1510

Dallas, TX 75201-3136

Telephone: 404-974-9450

Region VII

Office location: Kansas City, Missouri
States: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska
Patrick Kerr
Elaine Venard
Jeanne Ackerson
U.S. Department of Education
One Petticoat Lane
1010 Walnut, Suite 452
Kansas City, MO 64106
Telephone: 816-268-0404

Region VIII

Office location: Denver, Colorado
States: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming
Helen Littlejohn
Diana Huffman
U.S. Department of Education
César E. Chávez Memorial Building
1244 Speer Blvd., Suite 615
Denver, CO 80204-3582
Telephone: 303-844-3544

Region IX

Office location: San Francisco, California
States: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands
Joe Barison
U.S. Department of Education
50 Beale St., Room 9700
San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone: 415-486-5700

Region X

Office location: Seattle, Washington
States: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington
Linda Pauley
U.S. Department of Education
Jackson Federal Building
915 2nd Ave., Room 3362
Seattle, WA 98174-1099
Telephone: 206-607-1655

Hosting Your Own African American Education Teach-In



Students attend the 2014 Jackson AfAmEd Summit on April 25–26, 2014.



Executive Director David Johns (back row) poses with Regina Jackson and students from the East Oakland Youth Development Center at the Oakland AfAmED Summit on June 13–14, 2014.

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

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